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FOREIGN NEWS ON APPLES

MARKING ORDER RECOMMENDED ON APPLES IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM

A mark or label clearly indicating the source of origin of all fresh apples imported into the British market will be required next season if the recent recommendations for an Order in Council to that effect are passed upon favorably, according to a report received by the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Mr. Edwin Smith, the Department's Fruit Specialist in Europe. The Standing Committee on Agricultural and Horticultural Produce established under the Merchandise Marks Act of 1926 has recommended that an Order in Council be requested prohibiting the importation, exposure for sale at wholesale or actual sale at wholesale, of all fresh apples unless each container bears an indication of origin as defined in the Act. The Committee also expresses the opinion that the Order should prohibit the exposure of apples for sale by the retail trade unless the source of origin is indicated, but suggests that retailers need not apply the source of origin to packages sold in 14-pound lots or less.

In accordance with the provisions of the Merchandise Marks Act, 1926, these recommendations have to be passed upon by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and the Secretary of State for Scotland acting jointly. If they find that the recommendations will not prove harmful to the trade of the United Kingdom or to the trade of other parts of His Majesty's Dominions with the United Kingdom, they will make representation to His Majesty that it is desirable that an Order in Council be made prohibiting the importation, the exposure for sale or sale in the United Kingdom of imported apples unless they bear the indication of origin as described in the recommendation.

The Committee makes the following recommendations as to the form and manner of application of indication of origin:

(a) On importation, on exposure for sale wholesale, and on sale wholesale: By means of printing, stenciling, or branding on each container (or on a label secured to the container) in letters not less than half an inch in height.

(b) On exposure for sale by retail: By means of a label or show-card placed on, or in close proximity to, the apples to which it relates so as to be clearly visible to intending purchasers, bearing the indication in letters not less than half an inch in height.

The committee pointed out that their recommendation was supported by a representative of the Australian Commonwealth Government, by the Canadian Horticultural Council, and by the New Zealand Fruit Board. Canada, Australia and New Zealand together, it is stated, supplied nearly 40 per cent of the total imports of apples into the United Kingdom during the three years 1924-26.



Most of the other apples imported came from the United States. Figures for the four years 1923-26 were presented showing that approximately 33 per cent of the apples available on the British market during that period were home grown, 27 per cent were from the Dominions, and the remaining 40 per cent were of foreign origin, mostly from the United States.

#### Comments of Department's European Fruit Specialist

It is considered quite likely that the recommendation of the Committee with reference to the marking of imported apples will be followed by an Order in Council, states Mr. Smith. Until the Order in Council is actually issued, however, we cannot be certain as to exactly what will be required. At present the Committee indicates that "Grown in the U.S.A." might not be sufficient since this might stand for "Union of South Africa". It will probably be two months before the Order in Council is issued and it will probably be about four months after that before it will become effective.

Undoubtedly the aim of growers in Canada, New Zealand and Australia is to have their apples displayed at all times as "Empire apples", while all others would be displayed as "Foreign". In order to be certain, however, of meeting the requirements of the proposed Order in Council, American apple packers and label manufacturers should keep in mind that as far as we now know, "United States of America" in letters not less than half an inch in height is the only marking we can be sure of as meeting the requirements of the Merchandise Marks Act. As this can be applied either by use of a stencil or by a label, it is probable that many American shippers will use a stencil at opposite ends of the containers at the time of export rather than have label designs out of balance.

#### The Merchandise Marks Act

The Merchandise Marks Act, 1926, which came into force on June 15, 1926, aims at compelling the importer of goods in the United Kingdom to state the country of origin in cases where an English name or trade mark appears on the goods and in other cases where, after an inquiry by a committee, it is deemed desirable to impose this condition. Two committees have been constituted for the latter purpose, one to deal with agricultural produce and the other with non-agricultural produce.

These committees, after hearing persons representing such interests as appear to be affected, may make reports to the Government Departments concerned with a view to Orders in Council being made as to the marking of any particular merchandise imported. Following upon such representations to the Departments concerned, it is open to those Departments to obtain an Order in Council specifying the manner in which the indication of origin is to be applied to the goods, the date on which the Order is to come into force, and whether the goods are to bear the indication of origin at the time of importation or when subsequently exposed for sale.

